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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
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INFO RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000004

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OEXC](#) [KPAO](#) [SCUL](#) [NS](#)

SUBJECT: Evaluation of Participation of Jimmy Chin Chan Sen in FY10
MRP "Elementary and Secondary Education in the U.S."

¶1. (SBU) Overview and positives: Mr. Jimmy Chin Chan Sen, Education Inspector, participated as an International Visitor (IV) in the FY10 Multi-Regional Program (MRP) "ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE U.S." from October 17-November 07, 2009. During his return brief with the PolEcon Chief, PolEconOff, and EducationUSA advisor, Chin Chan Sen said he was honored to have been chosen for the program and that it was a great experience in his life. He mentioned this was his first trip to the United States. Chin Chan Sen said that the overall program was very good, but that the visit to Gallaudet University for deaf in Washington, D.C., was the most memorable experience of the program. Chin Chan Sen said he was awed by the opportunities and facilities available in the United States that allow the deaf to develop their inner potential and receive a full education. In Suriname, in comparison, they do not even have the opportunity to learn international sign language.

¶2. (SBU) Chin Chan Sen said U.S. universities were so modern he had "no words to describe them," and the courses and facilities were at a level that Suriname will not reach for many years. However, he said that at the elementary and secondary school levels, he was surprised to see that the United States and Surinamese education systems face many of the same challenges. For example, schools located in disadvantaged neighborhoods have fewer resources, and sport student bodies with poorer grades and test results, than schools in upscale neighborhoods. He also mentioned the visit to the school on the Indian Reservation, saying that it was supported by casino taxes. Chin Chan Sen said that, overall, he was very impressed by the U.S. educational system and the equipment and tools used for teaching. He said he appreciated the "No Child Left Behind" program. Chin Chan Sen also was moved by his visit to New Orleans and said he was amazed by the impact of Hurricane Katrina on every aspect of the people's lives there as well as the impact it had on the schools.

¶3. (SBU) Suggestions: Although Chin Chan Sen was very positive about the trip, he made a few suggestions that he thought would make the trip even better. First, although he enjoyed the tight schedule, he thought it would have been useful if, in the beginning, the participants had been given some additional time to get to know each other. Second, he said that if the program had begun with an introduction of the U.S. government system, and where federal, state, and local responsibilities lie for education, it would have helped the participants better understand the context of some of the earlier visits. He also indicated that he had been told that he would be met at the airport when he arrived in Washington, D.C., but he was not met and had to find his hotel by himself.

¶4. (SBU) Impact: Chin Chan Sen is an education inspector for 20 elementary schools, and works on a program to prevent secondary school dropouts in two districts of Suriname. In his role as

inspector, he is responsible for evaluating and improving the quality of education. One of the take-aways from his trip was his exposure to the peace education courses which are a part of the curriculum in Miami. He returned to Suriname with a number of books on conflict resolution and has already started a peace education program at secondary schools in one of Suriname's districts, and will be launching the same program in a second district the week of December 14. He also generated programming ideas on conflict resolution and is sharing this and other ideas in daily emails with his IV counterparts from various countries around the world. His visit to the United States has affected the whole inspection board of Suriname. Another "wake-up call" for Chin Chan Sen was the idea of community service being a part of the school program, which gives children the opportunity to practice values, because values are not teachable.

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